

MPSCS ASSISTS AGENCIES WITH INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS AT DUCK LAKE WILDFIRE IN MICHIGAN



Michigan's Public Safety Communications System

Crews continue to battle and contain the Duck Lake Wildfire in the Upper Peninsula's Luce County. The fire has burned more than 21,000 acres, and on May 25, Gov. Rick Snyder declared a state of disaster in Luce and Schoolcraft counties.

Many agencies came together to coordinate a response, including: Michigan Department of Natural Resources, United State Forest Service, Michigan National Guard, Michigan State Police and Emergency Management, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Luce County Sheriff, Wisconsin Department of Resources, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, volunteer firefighters, and Upper Peninsula Commission for Area Progress (211).

In addition, the Michigan's Public Safety Communications System was able to assist with interoperable communication efforts.

The COW (Communication-on-Wheels) and portable radios from the emergency pool were first deployed to Schoolcraft County on behalf of the DNR. When the Duck Lake Wildfire drew the majority of DNR resources to that fire's location, MPSCS personnel and equipment were deployed including portable radios, antennas, clips & bank chargers.

A communication plan was developed using 800 MHz TAC repeaters for field personnel to communicate with local command who in turn communicated with incident command using the trunked radio system. MPSCS Staff attended meetings every morning to answer questions and to take care of any repairs requested.

MPSCS Radio Techs and Steeple jacks committed hundreds of hours to ensure that communications between different agencies were seamless and uninterrupted.

Joe Wassa, the local MPSCS Radio Tech, and designated Communications Technician (COM-T) for the incident, was assigned to support communication needs, including programming radios being brought in from across the nation, and managing the state communication assets. He is still on site until further notice.

Besides using Mutual Aid and TAC channels set up at the surrounding towers, 8 separate Event Talkgroups have been assigned to cover both events at different times. As of May 31, 2012, there has been 112,487 Push-To-Talks on these 8 event Talkgroups.

For updates on the MPSCS, visit www.michigan.gov/mpscs or www.twitter.com/mpscs

For updates on the Duck Lake Fire Situation, visit www.michigan.gov/dnr.



Figure 1 - Photo Courtesy of Michigan Department of Natural Resources, May 25, 2012